

Message Text

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14 10

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 /073 W

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R 190846Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 706

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2150

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: NATIONAL REFERENDUM: FURTHER TRADE UNION AND EMPLOYER
ACTIVITY

REF: MANILA 2035

1. LABOR SECRETARY BLAS OPLE CONFIRMED TO LABATT ON
FEBRUARY 19 THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS WOULD BE MAIN SPEAKER
AT FEBRUARY 21 LABOR-SPONSORED REFERENDUM RALLY AT MANILA'S
FOLK ARTS THEATER. OPLE ALSO COMMENTED ORGANIZED LABOR
PUTTING ON REFERENDUM RALLIES IN PROVINCES. HE SPECI-
FICALLY MENTIONED ALU RALLY IN CEBU FEBRUARY 23 (WHICH
HE WOULD ADDRESS), TO BE FOLLOWED BY ALU-SPONSORED LABOR
RALLIES IN MINDANAO (CAGAYAN DE ORO AND DAVAO) AND PAFLU-
SPONSORED MEETINGS FOR MINERS IN BAGUIO REGION OF LUZON.

2. ON MANAGEMENT FRONT, OPLE NOTED THAT NEWLY-CREATED
CONFEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS (GROUPING INDUSTRY, COMMERCE,
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BUSINESS, BANKING, PROFESSIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANI-

ZATIONS AND CHAMBERS) WAS ALSO ENDORSING NEW SOCIETY REFORMS. AS WAS CASE WITH LABOR MANIFESTO (REFTEL), EMPLOYERS' FEBRUARY 17 "DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES" URGED BOTH "FREE AND ACTIVE" PARTICIPATION IN REFERENDUM AND "OVERWHELMING ENDORSEMENT OF PRESENT NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS PROGRAM FOR NATIONAL SALVATION, UNITY AND FUTURE GREATNESS."

3. FFW PRESIDENT JOHNNY TAN TELLS EMBASSY HE PERSONALLY STILL BELIEVES MARTIAL LAW BETTER FOR COUNTRY THAN EARLIER CORRUPT POLITICAL SYSTEM. HOWEVER, HE WOULD HAVE FELT HAPPIER IF LABOR MANIFESTO HAD STUCK TO PLEA FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN REFERENDUM AND OMITTED "VOTING INSTRUCTIONS". TAN ALSO TOLD OPLE FEBRUARY 19 THAT TIME PERHAPS HAS COME TO MODIFY GOVERNMENT'S NO-STRIKE POLICY.

4. COMMENT: SUDDEN REFERENDUM ACTIVITY BY ORGANIZED LABOR IS OBVIOUS INDICATION TRADE UNIONS HAVE GOTTEN MESSAGE GOVERNMENT WANTS THEM TO GET INVOLVED IN CAMPAIGNING. NO INDICATION AS YET WHAT THEME MARCOS WILL STRESS IN ADDRESS AT MANILA LABOR RALLY. HIGHLY UNLIKELY REGIME WOULD CONSIDER ANY REAL MODIFICATION OF STRIKE BAN, FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH OPLE HAS ADMITTED SOME "BIG BUSINESS" ELEMENTS WOULD NOT BE ADVERSE TO RESTORING LABOR'S STRIKE WEAPON IF THEY IN TURN COULD FIRE WORKERS (READ TRADE UNION ACTIVISTS) WITHOUT GOING THROUGH ENDLESS GOVERNMENT RED TAPE.
SULLIVAN

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